

# EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS

OF

PENNSYLVANIA.

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BY FRS. R. SHUNK,  
SUPERINTENDENT.

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Read in the House of Representatives, Jan. 15, 1847.

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## COMMON SCHOOL REPORT.

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*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:*

GENTLEMEN :—Amongst other duties required to be performed by the Superintendent of Common Schools, by the 10th section of the school law of 1836, he is directed to prepare and submit an annual report, containing a statement of the condition of the Common Schools throughout the Commonwealth, estimates and expenditures, plans for the improvement of the Common School system, and all such matters relating to his office of Superintendent, and the concerns of the Common Schools, as he shall deem it expedient to communicate. And by the Resolution of the 1st April, 1836, he is directed to lay before the Legislature, in his annual report, such abstracts of the reports of Universities, Colleges, Academies and Schools, as receive aid from the Commonwealth, as he may deem proper.

In compliance with these directions, the following annual report is respectfully submitted :

### THE CONDITION OF THE COMMON SCHOOLS THROUGH- OUT THE COMMONWEATH.

It is made the duty of the school directors of each accepting district, to make an annual report to the Superintendent, for the school year ending on the first Monday in June. The table A, in the appendix, contains an abstract of all the reports which have been received at this department, for the year ending on the first Monday of June last. Under the Act of 1836, these reports were made for the year ending on the 31st December. In consequence of the great delay in reciving them, it was enacted by the Act of the 21st of April,

1840, that they should be made for the year ending on the first Monday in June, in order that they might be submitted by the Superintendent at an early period of the annual session of the Legislature; and the hope was entertained that the time afforded would enable every board of directors to perform this important branch of their duty; but this reasonable hope has not been fully realized. No reports have been received from 183 of the accepting districts, although additional letters were written to them, requesting a compliance with the law. This deficiency in the reports, has been supplied in the following statement, by assuming that the proceedings in the non-reporting districts, were proportionate to those in the districts which did report; and it is presumed that the results are sufficiently accurate for practical purposes.

The table B, in the appendix, presents the reports in table A in a condensed form, and shows the results in the several counties.

#### SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

By the school law of 1836, every township, borough or ward, in this Commonwealth, not within the city or incorporated districts of the county of Philadelphia, constitutes a School district.

The whole number of School districts in the State on the first

Monday of June, 1841, exclusive of the city and county of Philadelphia, was

1,072

Accepting districts which had then received their share of the the State appropriation,

885

Accepting districts which had not then received their share of the State appropriation,

32

Whole number of accepting districts,

917

Number of non-accepting districts, in 1841,

155

#### SCHOOLS.

The number of schools in the accepting districts, during the year 1841, was

6,470

The average time the schools were open during the year, was

5 months, 7 days.

The number of schools yet required in those districts,

607

#### SCHOOL HOUSES.

Amount paid in the several districts, in 1841, for building, renting and repairing school houses,

\$123,004.19

## TEACHERS.

The number of male teachers employed during the year, was	5,234
The number of female teachers employed, was	2,368
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Whole number of teachers employed,	7,602
	<hr/>
Average salaries of the male teachers, per month,	\$18 91
Average salaries of the female teachers, per month,	11 45
	<hr/>

## FUNDS.

The whole amount of State appropriation for 1841, was	\$350,361 00
Of which there was paid to the city and county of Philadelphia,	49,283 00
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Balance,	\$301,078 00
Amount due for 1841, to 155 non-accepting districts,	51,677 16
	<hr/>
State appropriation for 1841, paid to accepting districts,	\$249,400 84
The tax assessed for school purposes, in the accepting districts, for the year 1841, is	\$397,952 01
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Whole amount of the school fund in the accepting districts, for the school year, 1841,	\$647,352 85
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## SCHOLARS.

The whole number of male scholars in the schools, in 1841,	156,225
The whole number of female scholars,	128,244
	<hr/>
Whole number of scholars in the schools, in 1841,	284,469
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The average number of scholars in each school, was	44
The average cost of each scholar, per quarter, was	\$1 26
The whole number of scholars receiving instruction in the German language, was	5,174
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The whole number of children in the Commonwealth, who are over five and under fifteen years of age, according to the United States' census of 1840, is 443,206.



By our law, every individual above the age of four years is directed, upon proper application, to be admitted into the Common Schools of his district. As this range is too wide for the object in view, which is to show, as nearly as possible, the number of children in the Commonwealth, who are practically the subjects of instruction in our Common Schools, the above limitation has been adopted. Though it would not be proper to exclude children over fifteen years of age from the schools, still the ten years, from five to fifteen, embrace the period of human life in which most of the impressions, by means of education, are made upon the mind and body, which fix the great outlines of character.

As before stated, the whole number of children in the State who are not 15 years of age, and over 5, is	443,206
The number over 5 and under 15 years of age in the city and county of Philadelphia, is	53,963
The number over 5, and under 15 years of age, in the non-accepting districts,	63,031
	<hr/> 116,994
Number in the accepting districts,	326,212
Number of scholars in the Common Schools in 1841,	284,469
	<hr/> 41,743

It thus appears that 41,743 of the children in the accepting districts, were not, during the year 1841, educated in the Common Schools of those districts. There were educated during the year in the Academies and Female Seminaries, 4,154 scholars. These principally reside in the accepting districts. The number taught in private schools in these districts, is not ascertained.

Hence it follows, that according to these estimates there were about 37,000 children, in 1841, in the accepting districts, who were not instructed either in the Common Schools, Academies or Female Seminaries.

From the progress already made in the business of education, as will hereafter appear, and the capacity of the system to meet the wants of the people, there is every reason to believe that in the course of a few years, every child in the accepting districts, which is the proper subject of common school instruction, will be taught in the public schools. This belief is strengthened by the fact, that the number of scholars taught in 1841, was 29,561 greater than it was in 1840.

As it is desirable that the exact number of scholars in the several districts should be known, from time to time, I respectfully suggest the propriety of requiring the County Commissioners, who are directed by the third section of the school law of 1838, triennially to return the exact number of the resident taxable citizens of each Common School district, at the same time to return the number of children between such ages, as may be specified by the Legislature.

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## OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA.

The schools in this district are not governed by the general law establishing a system of common school education ; but as they are organized in an important section of the Commonwealth, for the same purposes as the other Common Schools throughout the State, and receive an equal share of the annual appropriation, the following information in relation to them, taken principally from the reports of the controllers, is respectfully submitted :—

The city and county of Philadelphia were, by the act of the 3d March, 1818, erected into a district for the purpose of common school education, and denominated the first school district of the State of Pennsylvania. Under this act, a system of common school instruction has been prosecuted in the district, since the period of its passage. Its progress, for some years, was slow ; but it has gradually secured public confidence and support, and the Common Schools of the city and county of Philadelphia, are now regarded as being equal to, if they do not surpass in practical utility, those of any city in the Union. The Controllers in their last Annual Report, dated February, 1841, say :—“ This system, by which the pupils are first received into the Primary Schools, there to imbibe the elements of their intellectual improvement, thence are removed into the higher or Grammar Schools, where all the essential portions of a plain English education are communicated—and whence the learner is finally transferred to the High School, in which an extended collegiate course is opened to his acquisition, is now happily established ; and though but a short time has elapsed since this might have been affirmed, it may be added, is now in successful operation, and needs but the fostering care and approbation of the public, to be presented to it in entire perfection.”

Prior to the establishment of a general system of common school education throughout the State, the whole expense of maintaining the Common Schools in the first school district, was paid out of the county fund. Since that time the same amount of State appropriation, in proportion to the number of taxable inhabitants, has been annually paid to the city and county of Philadelphia, as has been paid to the accepting school districts throughout the State; and the residue of the cost of maintaining the public schools is paid out of the County Treasury.

The following table shows the annual receipts from the State and County Treasury, the sums expended in purchasing and erecting school houses, and the number of scholars educated in each year:—

	From the State.	From the Co.	Paid for S. Houses.	No. of Scholars.
1836,	\$47,617 54	\$ 80,000 00	\$ 23,433 07	11,127 00
1837,	89,536 51	56,000 00	110,864 25	17,000 00
1838,	39,578 00	96,000 00	74,790 35	18,794 00
1839,	39,578 00	162,271 00	23,464 17	21,968 00
1840,	49,283 00	150,000 00	36,078 81	23,192 00
1841,	49,283 00	165,000 00	46,785 44	27,500 00

The whole number of children in the city and county of Philadelphia, according to the census of 1840, over five and under fifteen years of age, is 53,963

Number educated in the public schools in 1841, 27,500

Number not educated in 1841, in the public schools, 26,463

The number taught in private schools in the city and county of Philadelphia, is not known.

#### OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

By the 4th section of the act of the 12th April, 1838, annual appropriations are made for ten years to Colleges, Academies and Female Seminaries, as follows, to wit:—

“To each university and college now incorporated, or which may be incorporated by the Legislature, and maintaining at least four professors, and instructing constantly at least one hundred students, one thousand dollars. To each academy and female seminary now incorporated, or which may be incorporated by the Legislature, maintaining one or more teachers capable of giving instruction in the Greek and Roman classics, mathematics and English, or English and German literature, and in which at least fifteen pupils shall con-



stantly be taught in either or all of the branches aforesaid, three hundred dollars. To each of said academies and female seminaries, where at least twenty-five pupils are taught, as aforesaid, four hundred dollars; and each of said academies and female seminaries, having at least two teachers, and in which forty or more pupils are constantly taught, as aforesaid, five hundred dollars."

Under this section, the following sums have been paid at the State Treasury, to colleges, academies and female seminaries. The number of scholars annually taught in them is annexed:—

In 1838, amount paid, \$	7,990 00	Number of scholars,	4,479
1839, " "	38,993 70	" " "	4,866
1840, " "	37,422 74	" " "	5,534
1841, " "	47,656 01	" " "	5,711

#### FEMALE SEMINARIES.

The table C, in the appendix, contains an abstract of all the reports received from Female Seminaries for the last year. The whole number which received a part of the appropriation made by the act of 1838, is thirty-four; and the whole sum received by them, during the year, is \$13,500 02.

Forms of the annual reports were transmitted to those institutions at an early period, and to those from which no reports had been received, letters were lately written requesting them to perform that duty, as required by the resolution of the General Assembly of the 1st of April, 1836. But reports from only twenty-three have been received.

From these reports, it appears that the average number of pupils in each, is forty.

The medium price of tuition for one year, is \$15 54.

The medium amount of the whole expense of a pupil for one year, including boarding, is \$118 40.

And that there are in the seminaries which have reported, sixty pupils, who are preparing themselves to become teachers in Common Schools.

#### ACADEMIES.

The table D, in the appendix, contains an abstract of all the reports received from Academies for the last year. The whole number which received a share of the State appropriation made by the Act of 1838, is 60; and the whole sum received by them is \$23,802 72.

The same measures which were taken to secure reports from the Female Seminaries, were adopted for the purpose of obtaining reports from all the Academies; but reports from only 48 have been received. From these reports, it appears that the average number of pupils in the Academies, is 47

The medium price of tuition for one year, \$15 38

The medium amount of the whole expense of a pupil for one year, including boarding, is 121 69

And that there are in the Academics which have reported, 144 pupils who are preparing themselves to become teachers in Common Schools.

#### COLLEGES.

The table E, in the appendix, contains an abstract of the reports received from the University of Pennsylvania, and six Colleges, for the last year. The whole number which received a portion of the State appropriation, made by the Act of 1838, is nine; and the whole sum received by them, is \$10,354 17.

From the reports, it appears that the average number of students in each of the institutions which have reported, including the preparatory schools, is 175

The medium price of tuition for one year, \$32 85

The medium amount of the whole expense of a pupil for one year, including boarding, is \$115 66

And that there are in the institutions which have reported, eleven students who are preparing to become teachers in Common Schools.

#### OF THE PROGRESS OF OUR SYSTEM OF COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION.

As this is a subject of importance to all who take a deep interest in Common School instruction, the following tables have been compiled from the reports of the Superintendent. They show briefly, but comprehensively, its progress from the commencement, in 1835, to the end of the school year, 1841.

*The whole number of School districts in the State, the number which have and which have not accepted.*

In	1836,	whole number	907	accepting,	536	non-accepting	371
	1837,	"	987	"	603	"	384
	1838,	"	1,001	"	765	"	236
	1839,	"	1,033	"	840	"	193
	1840,	"	1,050	"	887	"	163
	1841,	"	1,072	"	917	"	155

*Receipts and Expenditures of the several Common School districts, exclusive of the City and County of Philadelphia.*

	Receipts from the State Treasury.	Receipts from School tax.	Expenditures for School Houses.	Expenditures for teaching, fuel, &c.
In 1835,	\$29,460 33	not ascertained	not ascertained	not ascertained
1836,	98,670 54	\$207,105 37	111,803 01	193,972 90
1837,	463,749 55	231,552 36	202,230 52	493,071 39
1838,	323,794 92	385,788 00	149,132 23	560,450 69
1839,	276,826 92	382,527 89	161,384 06	579,162 78
1840,	264,536 66	395,918 00		580,262 63
1841,	249,400 84	397,952 01	123,004 19	524,348 66

*The whole number of Scholars taught in the Common Schools, and the average number of months the schools were open.*

					Months.	Days.
In 1835,	number of schools	100,000	schools were open		3	12
1836,	"	"	139,604	"	4	3
1837,	"	"	182,355	"	6	6*
1838,	"	"	233,710	"	5	18
1839,	"	"	254,908	"	5	8
1840,	"	"	254,908	"	5	8†
1841,	"	"	284,469	"	5	7

The progress of education, under the general law, illustrates the energy of the citizens of Pennsylvania. It was not until 1835, that the foundations of a system of common school education were permanently laid. The foregoing tables furnish the proofs of its rapid progress. Although other States and countries may be in advance of us in this great enterprize, let it be remembered that they have reached their present position by the labor of years. With us the system is yet in its infancy; and we may proudly ask those who are prone to complain because all is not done at once, which requires the work of years to perform, and who are disappointed because youth is not maturity, to point to the history of schools in any State or nation, where so much has been done, in so short a period, as in this Com-

\*The additional appropriation of \$500,000, on the 13th April, 1837, increased the time during which the schools were open in 1837 and 1838.

†The time for closing the annual report being changed from the 31st December, to the first Monday of June, the report for 1840, terminating on the first Monday of June, included seven months of the year included in the report for 1839, and for want of correct district reports was made to conform in this respect to the latter report.



monwealth. The habits of the people were formed by the custom which prevailed from the settlement of the province up to 1835, that provision for general education was a private, not a public duty. To change habits thus sanctioned by ages, is not the work of a day or a year. The school-master's profession was not amongst the most honorable. The adoption of the system increased the demand for the services of these invaluable public servants, who, as has been justly remarked, are, next to mothers, the most important members of society. This extraordinary demand, and the inadequate compensation which custom had fixed, produced a want of a sufficient number of teachers for our Common Schools. The number of non-accepting districts, the active minorities in some of the accepting districts, and the large sums required for the erection of school houses, presented difficulties of no ordinary magnitude. They have been met, and, to a considerable extent, overcome. That we yet have much to do is certain; but all may be accomplished in a reasonable time, by acting with a wise reference to our own peculiar circumstances.

#### OF THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SYSTEM.

The means employed for executing the great purpose of common school education, are the agents appointed to apply the funds derived from the Commonwealth, and from the school tax, and to superintend the schools. These agents, upon whose power, influence and intelligence, the success of the system essentially depends, have proved themselves, generally, to be adequate to the performance of the trust reposed in them. And as experience and the knowledge upon this interesting subject, which is circulating, strengthens their hands, and enlarges their views, their usefulness will be still further extended.

We have 917 accepting districts, in which there are 5,502 directors elected by the people. We have 6,470 schools, in most of which there are three taxable inhabitants elected to superintend them: making 19,410 primary committee-men; and we have 6,470 teachers. Thus we have 31,382 persons who are personally and officially engaged in the administration of the affairs of our Common Schools. They are all silently and industriously employed in promoting the great enterprize. There are, also, numerous heads of families, and others, who regard common school instruction as the hope of the Commonwealth, and sustain the schools by word and in deed.

The directors who are selected for their honesty and intelligence, labor throughout the year to advance the common good, and make



their annual report without fee or reward; the committee-men superintend with care their respective schools, without receiving any compensation; and the teachers perform their humble, laborious and inestimable services, without attracting the public gaze, or receiving the plaudits of assembled multitudes. These laborers in the great work of strengthening, improving and perpetuating our free institutions, are public benefactors who richly merit the esteem and gratitude of the whole people. To those agents the Commonwealth is indebted for much that has been done, and to them she must principally look as the means for accomplishing that which is yet to do. It cannot be denied that, hitherto, these agents have not received from the public, or the Legislature, all that countenance and support, that aid and direction, which their important position, their extensive powers to do good, and their faithfulness in the public service, demand. While schools are provided for the education of those destined for every pursuit of life, we have no seminaries for instructing teachers; and while all the treasures of knowledge and experience, relating to the various professions, trades and occupations, are embodied in books, pamphlets, treatises and newspapers, and liberally distributed, our school directors, committee-men and teachers, have to execute their numerous duties without being provided with the light of experience, which might be so readily furnished, and would be so highly useful.

Seminaries for instructing teachers in the art of governing schools, and communicating instruction, are among the most important improvements that are furnished by the example of other States and countries, in which the greatest advances towards perfection have been made in common school education. The establishment of such institutions is respectfully recommended to the Legislature: for their direct tendency is to elevate the standard of education, to improve our schools, and add to their usefulness.

District school libraries are so obviously calculated to improve the public mind, and advance the cause of general education, that no expenditure can be made in the districts more beneficial than that which is applied to their establishment.

To prove that these libraries might, with a little aid from the State, be provided for our districts, I presented in my last report a list of the volumes of the School Library, published in Boston, being a collection of original and selected works, embracing every department of science and literature—the whole cost of one hundred volumes being only \$57 50. I will now add, as an additional proof that the estab-

ishment of these libraries is practicable, that the Messrs. Harpers, of New York, have published three series of their School District Library, containing one hundred and forty-five 18mo. volumes, embracing history, voyages and travels, biography, natural history, the physical sciences, agriculture, manufactures, arts, commerce, the history and philosophy of education, &c., the cost of which is only \$60 00. The beauty and intrinsic worth of these works, will appear to the members of the Legislature by reference to copies of each placed in the State Library. The value of a collection of books like those contained in either of these libraries, would, in our school districts, be inestimable:—they would be the purest fountains of information for the people; and, by reference to the cost, it is manifest that a small contribution on the part of the State, made upon the condition that a proper sum be raised by the people, will soon be the means of establishing them in all our school districts.

To aid the school directors, committees and teachers, in the performance of their various duties, I am constrained to repeat the suggestion which has been frequently made, that the publication of a Common School Gazette, under the direction of the Superintendent, at the seat of Government, devoted entirely to the dissemination of information relating to the details of common school instruction, would be of very great practical value.

In relation to the subject of assisting the agents employed to execute our school laws, I beg leave respectfully to direct the attention of the Legislature to the "Teachers' Manual," by Thomas H. Palmer, A. M., a prize essay, lately published in Boston. This volume of two hundred and fifty pages is designed to present a complete and liberal system of education, suited to the wants of a free people. It shows the defects of the present system in the State of Massachusetts, and the means of correcting them. The advantages of classifying the schools, of establishing seminaries for the instruction of teachers, and school district libraries, are fully set forth. The principal object of the work, however, is to show the physical, intellectual and moral education required, and the means of communicating instruction to scholars, and of governing schools. These are presented in detail, and with great force and ability. The division of districts into sub-districts—laying out of school-house lots—erecting, lighting and warming school-houses, are also treated of. Although the work was designed for the use of another State, there is embodied in it such a variety of most valuable information, derived from experience, upon the subject of common school instruction, that it would be a desirable

acquisition in the hands of every teacher and Board of School Directors, in the Commonwealth. The author, who is a practical man, has employed his talents in preparing a work of unquestionable merit, which is peculiarly adapted to our wants. It may be had by the State at \$50 per 100 copies. An appropriation to purchase this volume for the use of our school agents, would be a judicious application of a small portion of the public money; and it would be an act in keeping with uniform usage. Militia officers are furnished with books to guide them in the discharge of their duties, and members of the Legislature are provided with manuals for governing and preserving order in deliberative assemblies.

It may not be improper to remark here, that reference is necessarily made to books published in other States upon the subject of education, because the talents and enterprize of our own citizens have hitherto not been directed to the production of such works.

It is provided by the 13th section of the school law of 1836, which is modified by the 12th section of the supplements of 1838, that the school directors of every accepting district may, if they deem it expedient, call a meeting of the qualified citizens of the district, on the first Tuesday of May in every third year, and hold an election to decide by ballot whether the Common School system shall be continued or not, and if a majority of the votes polled shall be in favor of no schools, the operation of the Common School system shall be suspended in the district.

The last year in which these meetings were authorized to be called, was the year 1840. On the first Tuesday of May, in that year, the directors in many of the districts, deemed it expedient to hold the elections, and from the returns received at this department, it appears that a majority of votes polled in seventy districts, were in favor of no schools. The effect of this decision was postponed by the 3d section of the supplement of 21st April, 1840, until the end of the next school year, for the obvious reason, that if it had gone into immediate effect, as it was made after the assessments had been taken, the districts would not only have been deprived for that year of the Common School law, but also of the benefits of the Act of 1809, providing for the education of the poor gratis. At the annual election in March, 1841, the decision in favor of no schools, made in May, 1840, was in thirty-four of the districts reversed, and consequently the system has in those districts proceeded without interruption.

This statement of facts is submitted to the consideration of the General Assembly, in reference to a suggestion hereafter to be made



on the subject of those triennial meetings, which were provided in order that the people of each district might, after a fair and full trial of the Common School system of education, have an opportunity of expressing their opinions and making a final decision upon it. In a very great majority of the accepting districts, this triennial election to decide whether the Common School system shall be continued or not, is not held. Neither the people nor the directors regard them expedient. They have adopted the system—they give it their undivided support—it has become a part of their local administration, and their habits are identified with it. But in some districts, where an active minority is desirous to defeat the system, and not only withholds its aid but interposes obstacles in the way of its progress, and in newly accepting districts, where a majority of the directors for the first year are always opposed to the system,\* it is respectfully suggested, that three years is not a sufficient period for making a fair trial of the merits of the system. As particular difficulties are always likely to occur when a change in the mode of education is introduced, that varies from the habits of the people, and as it cannot be expected that the directors, in performing duties which are new to them, can with the best intentions, avoid committing occasional errors; and as the most perplexing questions, the division of the districts into sub-districts, and the location of school houses, are among the first to be decided by them, an active minority, who not only withhold their counsel and support, but who magnify every real or supposed cause of complaint, exercise a power which prevents the friends of the system from making a fair experiment of its utility; for, before its value can be developed, the triennial election occurs. Now a generous opposition do not desire this advantage. All men are anxious to promote Common School education; and if our system, upon a fair trial, is found to be the best, it will be adopted and sustained by all; and as the period now allowed by law for making this trial is manifestly too short, its extension from three to five years will be calculated to operate most beneficially.

At the commencement of this report, the fact is stated that 183 of the accepting districts omitted to make the annual report to the Super-

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\* By our law, there is always a full board of six directors in non-accepting districts, two of whom are elected annually, and these are of course opposed to the system. When a majority for the first time decides in favor of the system, they at the same time elect two directors. It follows, generally, that for the first year after the system is adopted, the majority of the directors are opposed to it.



intendent, for the school year 1841, required by law. This omission is much regretted. To insure a faithful performance of this duty, a provision that the annual appropriation shall not hereafter be paid to any district for the year, until the annual report for the preceding year is received by the Superintendent, would most likely prove effectual. The annual appropriation for the school year, commencing on the first Monday of June, 1842, is payable after that time. The provision suggested is, that it shall not be paid until the annual report for the school year, terminating on the first Monday of June, 1842, is made.

#### OF NON-ACCEPTING DISTRICTS.

As already stated, there are in the Commonwealth 155 non-accepting districts. The annual appropriations to those districts, from the commencement of the school law, which were to be repaid into the school fund, if not accepted within two years, have been directed by the Legislature, from time to time, to remain in the Treasury for the use of the non-accepting districts. The last act for extending the time, was approved on the 29th May, 1841. It provides that they shall remain in the Treasury, and accumulate for the use of the non-accepting districts, until the 1st of November, 1843.

For a list of those districts see table F, in the appendix, which shows the names, counties in which they are situated, taxables, according to the enumerations of 1835 and 1839, and the estimated sum which will have accumulated for each, up to the end of the school year 1842. The non-accepting districts which accept the system for the first time, at the annual election in March next, will be entitled to the whole accumulation, including the school year 1843, which terminates on the first Monday of June in that year.

From this statement, it appears that the sum which will be due on the first Monday of June, 1842, on account of this accumulated fund, in districts which have hitherto declined to accept the system, may be estimated at about 335,000 dollars, or a sum equal to seven dollars and forty cents for each taxable inhabitant.

This large sum is much greater than the amount required, in addition to the district school tax, for the successful prosecution of the common school system of education in any one year; besides, if a large proportion of these districts accept the system at the next election, a serious additional demand will be made upon the State Treasury: hence an obvious suggestion arises, that it will be prudent for the Legislature to provide that a proportion of not more than one or

two dollars for each taxable inhabitant, of the accumulation, shall be paid annually to districts which may hereafter accept the system. By an arrangement of this kind, the districts will eventually receive their full and equal share of the State appropriation, in sums amply adequate efficiently to sustain them in the annual prosecution of the system of common school education, and the State Treasury will be relieved from an unequal pressure.

The statement above referred to presents to the inhabitants of the non-accepting districts a very strong reason in favor of accepting the system. An ordinary school tax, in addition to the efficient aid they will be entitled to receive from the Commonwealth, will enable them to establish and conduct their schools upon a plan of the most extensive usefulness.

Our system of education, so far from being repugnant to, is consistent with all our republican institutions. The directors who conduct it, are the immediate representatives of the inhabitants of the districts. Two of them are elected annually; their powers are distinctly defined; and they are enabled, by constant intercourse, always to ascertain the will of the citizens, and are bound by common and direct interest, and duty, to promote the common good. Our whole government is conducted upon the same principles, from the highest officer in the nation down to the lowest.

But the fundamental principle, that it is the duty of the government by common and united means to provide for common education, is not universally admitted, and doubts upon this subject are at the foundation of all objections to a system of common school instruction. The argument, that it is the duty of parents and guardians to provide for the education of their children, would be conclusive, if parents and guardians did faithfully perform this duty. But while the admission is freely made, that in very many instances this duty is faithfully performed, it cannot be denied that, when we take into view all the children of a State or country, no instance can be found in history where, by these means, common school education has been general. Our own Commonwealth furnishes a complete illustration of this truth. If the old system was sufficient, why did the demands of education require, since 1835, an expenditure of \$747,554 01 for the erection of at least 3,500 school-houses? They were erected by the directors, plain practical men, not to show that the former system was inadequate, but to meet the wants of the people. Why is it that the number of scholars in the schools has, in the accepting districts, so greatly increased, and that the advantages of education have been

so greatly extended? Not because we have abandoned a better for a worse system; but because we have been guided by the universal truth, that the standard of common education is always highest, and its benefits most extensively felt in countries and States where it is sustained by common and united means.

There are personal considerations of immense moment, which have a direct bearing upon this subject. The truth is familiar to common observation, that however careful parents and guardians may be of their children, in communities where negligence of proper education prevails, the influence of bad examples and bad habits, will be felt to an alarming extent, and go far to counteract the purest and the best efforts of the most prudent and careful parents and guardians, to bring up their children in the way wherein they should go. It is also known, that however careless some parents and guardians may be of their children, in communities where sound practical good education generally prevails, the influence of good habits and good examples, will overrule their negligence. Now that which is true in this respect, in extreme cases, is true in every modification of society. Where the standard of education and morals is high, the tendency is to elevate all; and where it is low, to depress all. It follows that every man who is desirous to promote the welfare of his own children, has a deep interest in elevating the standard of morals and knowledge in the community of which he is a member. Our mutual dependence upon each other is in this most strongly illustrated. It seems to be a distinct law of our nature, that the benefits of education, one of the greatest blessings of man, can only be fully enjoyed in company with all around us; because all attempts at a selfish appropriation of those benefits, defeat themselves. Let riches and talents, and honors, and distinctions, be variously and unequally distributed, because it is not necessary that the distribution should be equal; but education, that moral and intellectual teaching, which all men require to qualify them for the enjoyment of life, and for the proper performance of its duties, should, in every well constituted government, be essentially free and equal; not only because all have an unquestionable right to the benefits it confers, but because none can fully enjoy, unless *all* are made partakers of its blessings.

By education here, is not to be understood those superior degrees of instruction required by the divine, the doctor, the lawyer, and other professions. These they acquire, as the mechanic acquires his trade, after they have received a common school education. The education spoken of, is that which is required for *all* classes, and is



essential to all, as heads or members of families—as parts of a social community—as citizens of the republic, and as portions of the popular sovereignty under our free institutions. And since the obligations resulting from these relations rest upon *all*, it is the object of our system, so far as common school education is essential, to qualify *all* rightly to perform them.

But there are, in this happy country, peculiar motives for promoting general knowledge; for here every man forms an integral part of that sovereignty, which, of right, belongs to the people. The foundations of our political institutions rest upon man's capacity for self-government; not the capacity of one, of a hundred, of a thousand, but of *all*. Now, as that capacity, in order to be adequate to this great purpose, is dependent upon education, *who should of right be educated?* Should one? Should a hundred? Should a thousand? No—**ALL**—for *all* have equal duties to perform, and equal rights to maintain. It is, therefore, among the first duties of a free government to secure its permanency by providing for the education of the people. While despots, who only are sovereign in enslaved countries, make ample provision for the instruction of the legitimate heir of the sovereignty, the representatives of freemen are bound by the strongest obligations of duty to provide for the education of the popular sovereignty. Hence the Constitution of 1776, which was struck out in the heat of the Revolution by the master spirit of the Convention that formed it, the illustrious Franklin, provided that schools should be established in each county, **BY THE LEGISLATURE**, for the convenient instruction of youth; and, hence, a similar provision has been perpetuated in our frame of government.

No truth can be more clearly demonstrated, than that the reasons for enlightening the public mind have been, in the progress of this government, greatly multiplied. Questions of vital importance, involving the deepest interests of individuals, of the States and the Union, are crowded upon the people, from time to time, for their consideration and decision. For whatever may be said or believed concerning the power of the constituents over their representatives, it is a practical truth that the predominant opinions of the constituency control the representatives. Hence it follows that those great and vital questions are virtually decided by the people themselves.

Let the views here expressed, upon this interesting subject of general education, not be mistaken or misunderstood—they are not predicated of an ignorant population.

An opinion prevails to some extent, that instruction is only received



in schools, and that those who have not had the benefits of a school education are, consequently, ignorant. The error of this opinion is most apparent, when we consider what treasures of practical knowledge are derived from travel and continued intercourse in communities constituted as ours are; from parents and neighbors, from public meetings, the courts and the pulpit, from example, observation and experience; it follows, that although individuals and communities may be justly charged with the want of school instruction, yet to pronounce them ignorant is a slanderous falsehood. These are the men and the communities who lament the misfortune that excluded them from the facilities to acquire knowledge which are derived from Common School instruction, and which would, if enjoyed, have removed many of the obstacles they had to encounter through life, and which retarded them in their progress to honor and usefulness.

The citizens of this State, where Common School instruction has not hitherto been universal, rank among the most practical and intelligent inhabitants of this or any other country. Their onward march to true greatness has been, and is now in the front rank of modern civilization and refinement. The penal and civil codes of Pennsylvania—her judicial tribunals—her cities and villages—her farms and manufactories—her canals and railways—her roads and bridges—her hospitals and alms-houses—her temples of religion and charitable institutions—her Constitution and her Laws—her literary institutions and her Common Schools, and the morality and industry of her citizens, give her an elevated rank among enlightened States. All these, under a government of the people, are not the achievements of an ignorant population. They bear upon them the impress of the most enlarged views of policy, executed with the greatest prudence, wisdom and firmness—they are the trophies of freemen, and the proudest monuments of a nation's glory. But history and experience prove, that as respects states and nations, as well as individuals, the vigilance, virtue and wisdom that have acquired, must be doubled to preserve and perpetuate, true greatness.

As general education is the best security of freedom; as the rights of man must be understood to be appreciated, and as all that we have and enjoy of human liberty has been acquired by the people—they fought the battles of the revolution; they declared the independence of these States; they laid the foundations of free government; they adopted our Constitutions and sustained them in peace and in war—this people—this popular sovereignty, which redeemed these States, and which may by its example redeem the world from the domination

of tyrants, demands ample provision for universal education. Enlightened public opinion will be a wall of fire around our free institutions, and preserve them inviolate forever.

In conclusion, let it always be remembered, that while a sound, practical, common school education is the surest foundation of virtue and patriotism, it strengthens and adorns every christian grace; and that without it, the treasures of inspiration are in a great degree sealed, and the light which has been mercifully provided to guide man through this world, and shed its rays upon his pathway to immortal happiness, is but dimly reflected.

FRS. R. SHUNK,  
*Sup. Com. Schools.*

HARRISBURG, *January* 15, 1842.

\* \* \* The accompanying tabular statements, referred to in the report, have been omitted in this edition.



